

Message Text

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46

ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7327

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: AFGHAN OPTIONS IN RESPONDING TO PAKISTAN

REF: A. KABUL 7184 B. KABUL 7244

1. SUMMARY: MORE THAN A WEEK AFTER THE SUPREME COURT DECISION IN PAKISTAN REGARDING THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) AND AFTER THE BHUTTO SPEECH OF OCTOBER 31, IT STILL APPEARS AFGHAN GOVERNMENT (GOA) IS PONDERING THE TENOR OF ITS COMPLETE RESPONSE. ONE OPTION IN THE SPECTRUM MIGHT BE RENEWED INCITEMENT OF DISSIDENCE IN PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, THE JULY PANJSHIR INSURGENCY (VIEWED BY GOA AS PAK-INSPIRED RETRIBUTION) WILL, WE BELIEVE, ACT AS A DETERRENT, AS WILL THE ATTITUDE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, NOTABLY IRAN. AFGHANS ARE FACED WITH A DECISION WHICH WILL SERVE AS A PRECEDENT FOR THEIR FUTURE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PUSHTUNISTAN/BALUCHISTAN QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

2. MORE THAN A WEEK HAS PASSED SINCE THE PAKISTAN SUPREME COURT MADE ITS DECISION TO UPHOLD THE BANNING OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY FROM PAKISTANI POLITICS, AND PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S OCTOBER 31
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SPEECH TO THE PAK NATION IN WHICH HE ADDRESSED

THIS ISSUE. RADIO KABUL'S UNOFFICIAL "PUSHTUNISTAN PROGRAM" HAS FOLLOWED ITS INITIAL BLAST OF PROPAGANDA WITH A STEADY DIET OF COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE NAP DECISION AND THE BHUTTO SPEECH. BUT, ASIDE FROM THIS AND THE RELATIVELY MODERATE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS STATEMENT PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 3, AFGHAN OFFICIALS BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONTINUE TO GIVE INDICATION THAT THEY HAVE NOT YET COME TO CONCLUSIONS REGARDING HOW MUCH FURTHER GOA SHOULD GO IN RESPONDING TO THESE EVENTS IN PAKISTAN. OR MORE LIKELY IT IS DAOUD HIMSELF WHO IS PONDERING HIS NEXT MOVE, AND THE RETICENCE OF OUR OWN CONTACTS COMES FROM THEIR NOT HAVING BEEN HANDED THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.

3. WE BELIEVE THE AFGHANS HAVE A NUMBER OF OPTIONS OPEN IN RESPONDING. THE MOST EXTREME AFGHAN RESPONSE POSSIBLE WOULD BE ACTIVE STIMULATION OF SABOTAGE AND GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES OVER THE BORDER IN PAKISTAN. WE BELIEVE SUCH A DECISION, THOUGH TAKEN IN SECRET, WOULD FAIRLY SOON COME TO OUR ATTENTION.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT PANJSHIR INCIDENTS OF JULY MAY STAY THE HAND OF GOA AS IT CONTEMPLATES AIDING AND ABETTING DISSIDENCE IN PAKISTAN. WITHOUT ARGUING THE CORRECTNESS OF THEIR ASSESSMENT, WE THINK AFGHANS GENUINELY BELIEVE THAT PAKISTANI HANDS CREATED THE PANJSHIR PROBLEMS. THE RESULTING AFGHAN SENSE OF VULNERABILITY WITHIN ITS OWN BORDERS MAY BE SUFFICIENT FOR GOA TO CURB ITS IMPETUS TOWARD STIMULATION OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITY IN PAKISTAN.

5. AT THE OTHER END OF THE RESPONSE SPECTRUM A MODERATE GOA RESPONSE APPEARS TO US TO EQUAL JUST ABOUT WHAT THE AFGHANS HAVE DONE SO FAR IN REPLYING TO THE NAP DECISION AND THE BHUTTO SPEECH: ONE "MODERATE" STATEMENT BY A GOA SPOKESMAN AND HEAVIER SPLATTERS OF PROPAGANDA WHICH DO NOT HOWEVER EXCEED THE FREQUENT FAIRLY HIGH LEVELS OF OUTBURSTS ABOUT

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"PERSECUTION OF THE NAP" WE HAVE OBSERVED OVER THE PAST YEAR.

6. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH WE BELIEVE GOA WILL PUT INTO ITS DECISION EQUATION IS THE EFFECT OF ANY DECISION UPON ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WITHOUT PUTTING AN EXACT PRICE UPON OUR OWN LEVERAGE UPON THE AFGHANS, WE BELIEVE THEY ARE MINDFUL

OF U.S. VIEWS CONCERNING REGIONAL STABILITY.
WE BELIEVE AFGHANS ALSO ARE SENSITIVE TO THE
OPINION OF IRAN, WHICH WOULD SUGGEST TO THEM
A NEED TO TEMPER THEIR DISPUTE WITH THE BHUTTO
GOVERNMENT. A MAJOR QUESTION IS HOW GOA WILL
BE AFFECTED BY ATTITUDES OF THE SOVIET UNION,
AND WE LACK A CLEAR NOTION EVEN OF THE DIRECTION
THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE THE AFGHANS GO AT
THIS MOMENT OF THEIR DECISION MAKING.

7. SOME PATTERN OF INTERMEDIATE RESPONSE BETWEEN
THE PRESENT MODERATE COURSE AND THAT OF ABETTING
INSURGENCY IN PAKISTAN MAY OCCUR TO GOA AS A
MEANS OF KEEPING THE PUT BUBBLING (AND BHUTTO'S
FEET TO THE FIRE). BASICALLY THE
GOA IS FACED WITH A CHOICE WHICH WILL SERVE
AS AN IMPORTANT PRECEDENT IN FUTURE HANDLING OF
THE PUSHTUNISTAN/BALUCHISTAN ISSUE. IT APPEARS
FACED WITH A CHOICE WHICH WOULD ALMOST INEVITABLY
LEAD TOWARD FURTHER CONFRONTATION, OR ONE WHICH
WILL APPEAR A DELIBERATE BACKING AWAY FROM THIS.
EITHER COURSE RAISES SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR AFGHAN
POLICY. SEEN IN THIS LIGHT THE MEASURED PACE OF
AFGHAN RESPONSE TO RECENT EVENTS IS NOT SURPRISING.
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